THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) and (b) As per the reports available from the State/UT Governments, it shows that there has been no glowing increase in the incidence of production, distribution or sale of not-of-standards quality/spurious drugs posing serious health problems to the user.

A statement showing no. of samples tested and no found spurious by Drugs Control Organisation in various parts of the country during the year 1984—96 is given in statement (*see* below).

All medicines manufactured and sold in the country are required to comply with the quality parameters stated in the Books of Standards (Pharmacopoeias), as prescribed in Second Schedule of the Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 and Rules thereunder. Failure to do so would attract necessary punitive action like withdrawal of the batch sold, withdrawal of permission granted to manufacture the specific item, suspension, cancellation of manufacturing licences or prosecution of the manufacturer as per the provisions of Drugs & Cosmetics Act, 1940 & Rules thereunder.

Whenever specific complaints of poor quality of drugs are brought to the notices of the Government, necessary investigations are carried out by the Licensing Authorities of States/UTs and necessary punitive action taken against defaulters.

Statement

Samples Tested and Found spurious by various States/UTs Drugs Control Organisation during the period 1984—96

Year	No. of samples tested	No: found as spurious	% to Total
1984-85	18504	48	0.259
1985-86	19035	32	0.168
1986-87	26387	72	0.272
1987-88	26545	31	0.116
1988-89	27696	56	0.202
1989-90	26787	35	0.130
1990-91	31474	125	0.397
1991-92	34337	96	0.279
1992-93	22236	30	0.14
1993-94	31924	82	0.26
1994-95	29769	81	0.27
1995-96	30981	72	0.23

Hike in the prices of life saving drugs

3370. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Miniser of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have recently enchanced the prices of important life saving drugs;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons and justification for such an hike;

(c) whether the poor people have been effected at large due to hike in prices of drugs; and

(d) if so, what further steps Government propose to take in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) to (d) Life saving nature of the drugs depends upon a particular situation and circumstances. The DPCO, 95 does not make distinctions between life saving drugs and other drugs. Recently the NPPA has enchanced the price of a bulk drug, namely, the Pheniramine Maleate. The marginal change in the price of a bulk drug is warranted because of changes in the cost of inputs, changes in consumption norms and technology, etc.

The diseases that primarily afflict poor are mostly covered under the National Programme for Health Care of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare where essential drugs are supplied free by the Government through State

Governments. For ensuring availability of drugs at reasonable prices, the Government has been promulgating Drugs (Prices Control) Orders under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 from time to time. The current Order known as DPCO, 1995 was promulgated on 6.1.1995.

To ensure more availability of drugs at competitive and reasonable prices, the Pharmaceutical Sector has been totally de-licensed except for 5 times. This will encourage more units to come up in the Pharmaceutical Sector.

Cheating cases pending against the officials of National Fertilizers Ltd.

3371. DR. V. VENKATESHWAR RAO: Will the Miniser of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of cases of cheating pending against the officials of National Fertilizers Ltd. since last five years;

(b) the profit/loss position of the company for that period; and

(c) the action proposed to improve its working, efficiency and image in the market?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) Serving/retired officials of National Fertilizers Ltd. (NFL) have been charge sheeted in three cases filed by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for prosecution. CBI has also registered three regular cases for investigation into the criminal culpability of serving/retired officials of NFL.

(b) The net profit (after tax) earned by the company during the last five years is as under:—

Year	Rs./Crores
1993-94	389.11*
1994-95	121.93
1995-96	54.06
1996-97	11.20
1997-98	191.86 (Provisional)

*inclusive of an amount of Rs. 268.15 crore on account of write-back of depreciation consequent to the changes under Schedule XIV of the Companies Act, 1956.

(c) The company has undertaken measures to streamline its systems and procedures with a view to bringing about greater transparency and efficiency in the operations.

Hanumantha Rao Committee Report on Farm Nutrients Pricing

3372. SHRI AMAR SINGH: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have received any communication from Fertilizers Association of India for not implementing the Hanumantha Rao Committee Report on farm nutrients pricing in toto; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and Government's reaction in regard thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (DR. A.K. PATEL): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Inter-ministerial consultations and dialogue with the industry have been undertaken in regard to the various recommendations contained in the report of the High Powered Fertilizers Pricing Policy Review Committee headed by Prof. C.H. Hanumantha Rao. A new fertilizers policy will be announced after the conclusion of this exercise.